

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3214

May 15, 2018

David P. Pekoske
Administrator, Transportation Security Administration
601 12th St South
Arlington, VA 20598

Dear Administrator Pekoske,

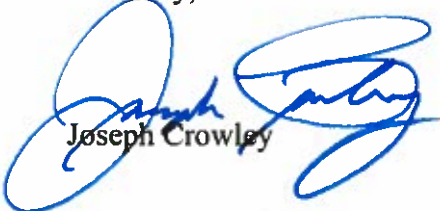
I am concerned about the treatment of Canadian cabinet minister Navdeep Bains that recently came to light and seek your assistance in ensuring that similar situations are addressed with respect to the Sikh-American community.

Mr. Bains, Canada's Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, was returning home from an official trip to Michigan when he was asked by TSA to remove his religiously mandated turban twice during his airport security screening. After successfully clearing the metal detector, Mr. Bains was instructed to remove his turban without any apparent cause of containing a security threat. Mr. Bains was then subjected to additional screening, including a swab test, and was again ordered to remove his turban. Mr. Bains requested a second swab test, which he successfully cleared. Mr. Bains was permitted to proceed to his gate, where another TSA agent, citing an error in protocol, requested he return to the security check point and remove his turban.

I appreciate the hard work that TSA carries out every day in protecting the American people. At the same time, Sikhs and Sikh-Americans have informed me that situations like this are emblematic of their ongoing concerns regarding screenings. In light of these concerns, I would appreciate any information you can provide with respect to how issues affecting the broader Sikh and Sikh-American communities are approached by TSA, including what standards warrant secondary screening. I also understand that what happened with respect to Mr. Bains wasn't carried out according to normal protocols and I am interested in knowing the steps that TSA has already taken or could take to expand education with an aim toward preventing these situations from occurring in the future.

I look forward to working with you in pursuing constructive solutions that help address community concerns.

Sincerely,



Joseph Crowley